

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 02799 272259Z

ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7084

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T BOGOTA 2799

EXDIS

ARA FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, MOPS, CU, UR, VE, BR, CO

SUBJ: BRIEFINGS OF SELECTED LATIN AMERICAN LEADERS ON
CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA

REF: STATE 75151

2. PRESIDENT LOPEZ INFORMS ME THAT HE IS CONVINCED THAT FIDEL CASTRO IS CONSTRUCTING HIMSELF A POLITICAL POSITION AMONG THE BLACK NATIONS. THE PRESIDENT CONSIDERS THE PRESENT INTERVENTION IN AFRICA A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE ORIGINAL CASTRO PLAN TO EXPORT REVOLUTION TO LATIN AMERICA, WHICH ULTIMATELY WAS A FAILURE. HIS CURRENT AFRICAN VENTURE IS DESIGNED TO GAIN STATURE AND INFLUENCE IN THE BLACK REPUBLICS IN THE CARIBBEAN. HE MENTIONED JAMAICA SEVERAL TIMES. THE PRESIDENT, HOWEVER, BELIEVES THAT BELIZE IS CASTRO'S MOST IMPORTANT OBJECTIVE IN THE AREA. IF HE SHOULD MANAGE TO OBTAIN A FOOTHOLD THERE, THIS WOULD PERMIT HIM A BASE OF OPERATIONS TO SUBVERT THE REST OF CENTRAL AMERICA. THE PRESIDENT SAID HE HAD READ AN INTELLIGENCE REPORT INDICATING THAT CASTRO HAD PLANS FOR RADIO TRANSMITTERS IN BELIZE. WITH THE OLIGARCHIC AND NON-DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS WHICH PREVAIL IN CENTRAL AMERICA, THESE WOULD BE EASY PREY.

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PAGE 02 BOGOTA 02799 272259Z

2. THE PRESIDENT ALSO SAID THAT HE HAD READ A REPORT WHICH HE COULD NOT SOURCE RELATING THE AFRICAN INTERVENTION TO POPULATION PRESSURES IN CUBA. AFTER SOME DISCUSSION, HE AGREED THAT THIS SEEMED SOMEWHAT FANCIFUL BUT NOT TO BE DISMISSED OUT OF HAND.

3. THE PRESIDENT ALSO QUOTED FROM A REPORT FROM THE COLOMBIAN

AMBASSADOR TO MOSCOW WHO BELIEVES THAT THE SOVIET LOGISTICS SUPPORT HAS REDOUNDED TO THE BENEFIT OF CASTRO IN THE EYES OF THE THIRD WORLD. THE THESIS IS, HOW CLEVER OF THE CUBANS TO HAVE THE SOVIETS PICK UP THE TAB FOR THEIR ADVENTURES. IN EFFECT, THE AFRICAN INTERVENTION IS COSTING THEM VERY LITTLE. CASUALTIES ARE LOW; THE CUBANS HAVE BEEN SUPPLIED WITH THE LATEST IN ARMAMENTS: THE PRESIDENT BELIEVES IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO DISCREDIT THE CUBANS FOR THEIR TIES WITH THE SOVIETS IN THE LIGHT OF THIS ATTITUDE.

4. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT FROM THE STANDPOINT OF PUBLIC OPINION THE HORN OF AFRICA, ANGOLA, ETC., ARE FAR AWAY. HE HIMSELF, HOWEVER, IS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT CASTRO'S GROWING STATURE WITH THE BLACK REPUBLICS IN THE HEMISPHERE AS INDICATED ABOVE. HE IS AT A LOSS AS TO WHAT MIGHT BE DONE ABOUT THIS BUT HAS AN OPEN MIND ON THE SUBJECT. HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO HEAR OF ANY IDEAS DEVELOPED IN THE COURSE OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S TRIP TO LATIN AMERICA.

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